1/19/70

Dear Gris,

The serious flaw in your recollection prompts me to drop everything and make immediate, if brief, response to your letter of the 12th.

The story of the whorehouse is anything but that Ivon owned it. Ivon is as clean as they come, and wholesome, including in his personal life. He is a very "good cop", an honest man, etc. I am fond of him and respect him.

Garrison has asked me why he could get no information out of a certain very popular watering place heavily attended by the far-out young and rougher tyned. He said he had concluded there was nothing to be gotten from there because Louis was either a friend of or knew the owner. My own check produced an explanation from someone living close to that place: above this bar was a fancy whorehouse. Garrison's reaction was genuine surprise and disbelief, for he quite sincerely believed he had closed all of them. Matter of fact, this is the only one of which I ever did hear in N.O. My own association with Ivon convinces me it is impossible for him to have any such taint. He just is not that kind of guy. And he is so very hard-working, believe me. The taxpayers cannot begin to pay him for the house he puts in.

While Garrison and I have had very serious disagreements, and some are pretty basic, and while we have barely spoken for several years because he prefers it that way, I do not believe any of the tenuous stories about his alleged Mafia connections. The fact is that he has under indictment a member of the family involved, at least one indictment, of a man whose name is identical with that of the one from whom he either bought his house or his neighbor, as I recall from the stories in the magazines. It is the kind of a case in which he could easily have avoided an indictment, involving the sale of stolen property.

That whole area is so confused and obfuscated, so larded with illegitimate criticism (where legitimate was available and eschewed), I do, strongly, caution you to be more that usually careful with what you right and have someone else check it before publication.

There is nothing new of which I know for we are next to entirely out of contact. As of my last contact, their only interest was the pending Shaw perjury case. Here, for my own reasons, I agree with them. He did perjur himself and he was not alone in so doing. I think I have a better case than Garrison alleged.

For your understanding of Garrison and the Mafia, they would be stupid to violate the law in his jurisdiction because they have sommany very profitable legitimate businesses operating there from which they make so much money. Why risk it? Especially with an independent man like him? All that activity is in the next parish, Jefferson. This is outside his jurisdiction. And I doubt Mafia involvement in the assassination. I know of nothing to justify, "If there was a conspiracy that killed President Kennedy...the Cosa Nostra should have been a prime suspect". Not a single thing. Nor do I know of anything to indicate, leave alone prove, that Jim "was in close terms with Marcello". In a place like New Orleans, where they have their own folkways and mores, st andards of political conduct that would not be accepted elsewhere, this would be anything but unusual. But I have no reason to believe it nor xxx have I heard even a whisper of it.

I lament the fragmentation with you but anticipate no change and visualize no possibility. Things have happened to fine people, who do miserable things without awareness and thinking it high principle. Even Penn, who is now utterly irrational. Desparately broke as I am, for example, he acknolwedges owing me money, refuses to pay it (and he has it), will not even let me take it out in trade to get copies of the 26 and the DOA film from him to give students anxious to help us. When someone like Penn is capable of this (and refusing to respond to mail on it), is there any hope of any change for the better? He actually, really believes I am some kind of agent. To him, this justifies anything he may do.

Most of the others who have dropped out, of those who had public associations, represent no loss, for their activity was in many respects very hurtful because they were both irresponsible and dishonest in too many cases.

However, there is still a small band of us continuing work. - have four books completed, copyrighted in xerox editions I cannot get printed, and I keep plugging away. I have much more significant materials that I once dreamed we could ever get. And whether or not I cam bring these books out - going further in debt to do it is impossible- I am keeping working on new work.

Out of times. Best to you all,

Sincerely,